

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environmental Assessment

Postponement of Permit Deadline for Oil and Gas Construction Activities
(LAC 33:IX.2511) (WQ060ft)

Under the authority of the Environmental Quality Act, R.S. 30:2001 et seq., and in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:950 et seq., the secretary gives notice that rulemaking procedures have been initiated to amend the Water Quality regulations, LAC 33:IX.2511 (Log #WQ060ft).

This proposed rule is identical to federal regulations found in 70 FR 11560-11563, No. 45 (March 9, 2005), which are applicable in Louisiana. For more information regarding the federal requirement, contact the Regulation Development Section at (225) 219-3550 or Box 4314, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4314. No fiscal or economic impact will result from the proposed rule; therefore, the rule will be promulgated in accordance with R.S. 49:953(F)(3) and (4).

This proposed rule implements the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule to postpone until June 12, 2006, the requirement to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit authorization for oil and gas construction activity that disturbs one to five acres of land. This second postponement promulgated by EPA for these activities is necessary in order to afford EPA additional time to complete consideration of issues raised by stakeholders about storm water runoff from these activities and of procedures for controlling storm water discharges as appropriate to mitigate impacts on water quality. Within six months, EPA intends to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking for addressing these discharges and to invite public comments.

The Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services (successor to the former Office of Water Resources), became the NPDES permit issuing authority for the state of Louisiana on August 27, 1996. This rule is necessary for the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) program to be consistent with the EPA NPDES program. The department issued an emergency rule, effective March 10, 2005, to reflect the revised federal requirement until a final rule can be promulgated. The basis and rationale for this rule are to mirror the federal regulations.

This proposed rule meets an exception listed in R.S. 30:2019(D)(2) and R.S. 49:953(G)(3); therefore, no report regarding environmental/health benefits and social/economic costs is required. This proposed rule has no known impact on family formation, stability, and autonomy as described in R.S. 49:972.

A public hearing will be held on May 25, 2005, at 1:30 p.m. in the Galvez Building, Oliver Pollock Conference Room C111, 602 N. Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Interested persons are invited to attend and submit oral comments on the proposed amendments. Should individuals with a disability need an accommodation in order to participate, contact Judith A.

Schuerman, Ph.D., at the address given below or at (225) 219-3550. Free parking is available across the street in the Galvez parking garage when the parking ticket is validated by department personnel at the hearing.

All interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the proposed regulation. Persons commenting should reference this proposed regulation by WQ060ft. Such comments must be received no later than May 25, 2005, at 4:30 p.m., and should be sent to Judith A. Schuerman, Ph.D., Office of Environmental Assessment, Regulation Development Section, Box 4314, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4314 or to FAX (225) 219-3582 or by e-mail to judith.schuerman@la.gov. The comment period for this rule ends on the same date as the public hearing. Copies of this proposed regulation can be purchased by contacting the DEQ Public Records Center at (225) 219-3168. Check or money order is required in advance for each copy of WQ060ft. This regulation is available on the Internet at www.deq.louisiana.gov under Rules and Regulations.

This proposed regulation is available for inspection at the following DEQ office locations from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.: 602 N. Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802; 1823 Highway 546, West Monroe, LA 71292; State Office Building, 1525 Fairfield Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71101; 1301 Gadwall Street, Lake Charles, LA 70615; 201 Evans Road, Building 4, Suite 420, New Orleans, LA 70123; 111 New Center Drive, Lafayette, LA 70508; 110 Barataria Street, Lockport, LA 70374.

Wilbert F. Jordan, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

Title 33
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Part IX. Water Quality

Subpart 2. The Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) Program

Chapter 25. Permit Application and Special LPDES Program Requirements

§2511. Storm Water Discharges

A. - E.7.c. ...

8. Any storm water discharge associated with small construction activity identified in Subparagraph B.15.a of this Section, other than discharges associated with small construction activity at oil and gas exploration, production, process, and treatment operations or transmission facilities, requires permit authorization by March 10, 2003, unless designated for coverage before then. Discharges associated with small construction activity at such oil and gas sites require permit authorization by June 12, 2006~~March 10, 2005~~.

E.9 - G.4.d. ...

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 30:2001 et seq., and in particular Section 2074(B)(3) and (B)(4).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Water Resources, LR 21:945 (September 1995), amended LR 23:957 (August 1997), amended by the Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Planning Division, LR 26:2273 (October 2000), LR 26:2552 (November 2000), repromulgated LR 27:40 (January 2001), amended LR 28:467 (March 2002), LR 29:701 (May 2003), repromulgated LR 30:230 (February 2004), amended by the Office of Environmental Assessment, LR 31: